

Wednesday, June 9, 2010

Jim Hubbard, 202-225-2671

***48 Members of Congress Urge BP to Focus on Ending the Spill and Cleaning It Up***

(WASHINGTON, DC) - After BP began a full-fledged PR advertising campaign and announced its intention to move forward with a payment to shareholders Tuesday, Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3) joined a coalition of U.S. House members led by Rep. Peter Welch (VT) calling on BP CEO Tony Hayward to suspend advertising campaigns and dividend payments until it remedies the economic and environmental disaster it caused in the Gulf of Mexico.

In a letter to Hayward, Russ Carnahan urged BP not to divert its resources away from the ongoing recovery effort and directing them to halt national public relations campaigns and profit payouts to their shareholders.

**"We urge you to halt your planned dividend payout and cancel your advertising campaign until you have done the hard work of capping the well, cleaning up the Gulf Coast and making whole those whose very livelihoods are threatened by this catastrophe," the members wrote. "Not a moment before then should you return to business as usual."**

BP announced Tuesday morning that it would move forward with an annual \$10 billion dividend payment announced a week after the Deepwater Horizon explosion. According to press reports, the company has launched a \$50 million television advertisement campaign, along with full-page ads in major newspapers. A Credit Suisse estimate estimates the potential cost of the recovery effort as high as \$37 billion if the well is capped in August.

**"This is an economic and environmental disaster - and it should never have happened,"** said Carnahan.

**"BP must focus their attention on fixing the leak and cleaning up this mess without passing on the expense to taxpayers. We must then strengthen regulation of the oil industry to make sure this never happens again."**

The letter sent today is copied below:

*Tony Hayward  
Chief Executive Officer  
BP  
1 St James's Square  
London  
SW1Y 4PD*

*Dear Mr. Hayward,*

*As BP presides over one of the greatest environmental and economic catastrophes of our time, we find it troubling that your company plans to divert financial resources to shareholder dividends and slick marketing campaigns.*

*Even as oil threatens to flow into the Gulf of Mexico for months to come, press reports indicate that you hope to distribute \$10 billion in dividends to shareholders before the full cost of this devastating oil spill is known. At the same time, your company has launched an aggressive public relations campaign, with full page ads in major newspapers and a reported \$50 million television blitz.*

*We urge you to halt your planned dividend payout and cancel your advertising campaign until you have done the hard work of capping the well, cleaning up the Gulf Coast and making whole those whose very livelihoods are threatened by this catastrophe. Not a moment before then should you return to business as usual.*

*Sincerely,*

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